United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/53

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Shia Rights Watch Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09209(E)
1809209

Please recycle

Genocide of the Hazara: Human Rights Situation that Requires the Council's Attention

Shia Rights Watch expresses concern for the genocide of the transnational population of Hazara. Anti-Shiism, or discrimination againsregmt Shia Muslims based on their faith identity, continues to prosper in nations where Hazara Shia reside- including nations of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Hazara people can be classified as one of the middle eastern regions most targeted Shia populations. Since the 1800's, researchers estimate a 58% reduction in the community of Hazara's in Afghanistan alone.

Hazara people have moved as diaspora fleeing from violence to various cities of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Like the rest of the Shia international community, Hazara Shia are no stranger to targeted violence. As far as the 16th century, the Hazara population has been targeted by extremism, both systematic and social. In the 19th century, political leaders rounded up and killed all Shia Muslims located in central Afghanistan. Those not killed were sold as slaves.

In addition to lacking political support, anti-Shia sentiment in terror organizations such as the Taliban, continually instill anti-Hazara sentiment in society by stating, "Hazaras are not Muslim, you can kill them." Religious educators express that "killing Hazara's [is] the key to heaven."

Despite enduring thousands of years of violence, Hazara's continue to face the dangers of everyday life. Existing terror organization continue to target this group. In the past decade, over 1,000 Hazara have been killed by bombs and targeted shootings.

Targeting of the Hazara take many forms. Notable members of the community are assassinated by armed assailants. Hazara involvement in national processes are suppressed by bombings in areas densely populated by this population.

When they are not being killed by extremism, Hazara Shia faces discrimination in their broader communities. Shadowed by perceptions of being "others" within their own homes, Hazara Shia is faced with a glass ceiling. Their opportunities in employment and education are limited, solely by their distinguishable by their facial features and dialect.

Hazara Shia face both direct and cultural violence. This population is killed by targeted attacks, and existing discrimination in society keeps this population from obtaining justice. Despite the vast number of Shia deaths, a limited number of investigations have to lead to arrests and arraignment. Anti-Shia education continues to prosper in schools and educational centers.

The lack of political and international response to the ongoing killing of the Hazara population reinforces violence against religious minorities in the South Asian region of the world.

Shia Rights Watch calls on the Human Right Council and the international community to bring justice to the Hazara people by carrying out necessary prosecutions to ensure that perpetrators of violence are imprisoned.

This population must be highlighted as an endangered population that needs protection. Shia Rights Watch urges the international community to take steps in reducing violence against this ethnic group.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/54

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Action on Smoking and Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09210(E)
1809210

Please recycle

Tobacco and the Right to Health

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) wishes the 38th session of the Human Rights Council every success and sincerely hopes that under the guidance of its President, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, it will continue to promote the "right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health."

On 23 June 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution HRC/RES/35/23. The Resolution urges States to work towards the full implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals and targets with a view to contributing to the realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including Target 3.a "strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries as appropriate". ASH welcomes the recognition of this target in the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the contributions of the right to health framework to the effective implementation and achievement of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Tobacco remains the leading cause of global preventable death, killing over 7 million annually [1] and costing the global economy nearly two percent of its GDP.[2]

For these reasons, participants of the 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH), who met in Cape Town, South Africa, on 7-9 March 2018, and a growing list of over 150 civil society organizations from across the globe, showed their determination and commitment to promote and protect public health and human rights in relation to the tobacco epidemic by adopting the Cape Town Declaration on Human Rights and a Tobacco Free World.[3] The Cape Town Declaration asserts that "the manufacture, marketing and sale of tobacco are incompatible with the human right to health," and that it is "the obligation of States to address human rights implications over the whole life-cycle of tobacco growing, manufacturing, marketing, distribution, consumption and post consumption, including child labor, violations of workers' rights and the rights of special populations as well as environmental destruction."

The WCTOH participants, as well as the signatory organizations, also reaffirmed the value of the preamble of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), in which the Parties express their determination "to give priority to the right to protect public health," and to respect the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as expressed in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Action on Smoking and Health respectfully requests that the thirty eighth session of the Human Rights Council and subsequent HRC Resolutions and processes addressing the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development consider:

- *Welcoming the adoption by the 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health of the Cape Town Declaration on Human Rights and a Tobacco-free World, which made specific reference to resolution 35/23 and to Sustainable Development Goal 3 and called upon the Human Rights Council to take into account the threat tobacco poses to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.*
- *Addressing the impact on the right to health of the tobacco epidemic, which causes seven million preventable deaths annually[4] and costs the global economy nearly two percent of GDP[5], creating a substantial barrier to economic and human development.*

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1 Available from http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/

2 Available from http://www.europe.undp.org/content/geneva/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/05/26/tobacco-kills-more-than-7-million-people-per-year-and-is-costing-the-world-economy-usd-1-4-trillion-annually.html

3 Available from www.ash.org/declaration

4 *Id.* at note 1.

5 *Id.* at note 2.

- *Encouraging the Special Rapporteur, while considering the many ways towards the full realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, to pay particular attention to the obligation of States to address human rights implications over the whole life-cycle of tobacco growing, manufacturing, marketing, distribution, consumption and post consumption.*
- *Encouraging States, when reporting on the implementation of the right to health under human rights treaties, to provide information on measures taken and challenges faced in implementing the FCTC and reducing the harm caused by tobacco that affect that right.*
- *Inviting States to include the status of tobacco control efforts, both successes and failures, and the impact of those efforts on the right to health, when reporting during their Universal Periodic Review.*

Action on Smoking and Health congratulates the Human Rights Council for its efforts to include human rights considerations in the 2030 Development Agenda. Human development requires the vigorous application of human rights norms. ASH will continue to support the Council in its promotion of human rights, especially the right to health.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/55

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09212(E)
1809212

Please recycle

The Culture of Impunity in Bahrain

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) takes this opportunity at the 38th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise serious concern regarding the continued culture of impunity Bahrain. Bahraini officials continue to commit widespread and systematic human rights abuses, yet the government and the courts have little to show in terms of accountability.

1. Recent Widespread Abuses

In Bahrain, there have been numerous credible accounts of abuses carried out by officials – including senior officials and members of the royal family. Torture and ill-treatment by officials is prevalent in Bahraini detention centers and prisons, especially in cases where anti-terror laws are being used against activists. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances also remain widespread throughout the kingdom. Extrajudicial killings have been committed by security forces through violent raids on peaceful protests and attacks on civilians have led to nearly zero repercussions. Many of these crimes are directed towards human rights defenders, political opposition leaders, religious figures and journalists. These tactics are used to crack down on civil and political society, and the government has largely endorsed these crimes by failing to seek out and adequately punish perpetrators.

2. Targeting of Journalists

Crimes against journalists have been especially egregious, and only a small number of low-level officials have been prosecuted and convicted, with most sentences failing to reflect the gravity of the crimes. In the case of Nazeeha Saeed, for example, despite clear evidence, the officer responsible for her torture in 2011 was ultimately acquitted. Meanwhile, security forces continue to systematically commit abuses and even retaliate against those who come forward with complaints.

Even in cases of suspicious death or extrajudicial killing, the government has refused to properly investigate and prosecute perpetrators. Zakariya Rashid Hassan al-Ashari died under suspicious circumstances after he was arrested and charged with disseminating false news and inciting hatred in 2011. Authorities claimed al-Ashari died from complications of sickle-cell anemia, but the journalist's family told reporters that he did not suffer from that illness or any other ailment. Only a few days after al-Ashari's death, Karim Fakhrawi, Al-Wasat's co-founder, was killed by Bahrain's National Security Agency. The government investigated the case amid public pressure, but the responsible officials were never formally charged with torture leading to death, which could yield up to life in prison. Instead, the officials were ultimately sentenced to just three years in prison on a lesser charge after appeal. Then in 2012, freelance journalist Ahmed Ismael Hassan al-Samadi died after being shot while filming a protest in the village of Salmabad. Following Hassan's death, the UN called for an investigation into his killing, but the status of the judicial inquiry into the case is still considered unresolved.

3. Lack of Accountability

A climate of impunity persists in Bahrain – where the government has failed to hold officials accountable for systematic human rights violations. The abuses committed during and since the crackdown of the 2011 peaceful protests have only resulted in a limited number of prosecutions and convictions, while the few limited sentences handed down were later greatly reduced.

In early January 2017 masked security personnel believed to be members of the National Security Agency (NSA) attacked a peaceful sit-in in the village of Duraz, firing live ammunition into the crowd and killing 18-year-old Mustafa Hamdan. The sit-in was then permanently dispersed in May when security forces again raided Duraz, this time arresting hundreds and killing five, including Hamdan's older brother. No investigation or prosecution was known to have taken place into the deaths of the six men.
That same year, a Bahraini activist, Ebtisam al-Saegh, was repeatedly harassed, detained, and tortured. From January to April – and particularly following her participation in the 34th Human Rights Council – al-Saegh was repeatedly

interrogated; subjected to a state-backed defamation campaign; targeted with travel bans; and threatened with attacks on her family. Then in May, al-Saegh was summoned for interrogation by the National Security Agency (NSA) and physically, psychologically and sexually tortured. Authorities threatened to continue targeting al-Saegh and her family if she did not cease her human rights activities. No investigation into these crimes took place.

To date, no senior officials have been held accountable for torture, excessive use of force or extrajudicial killings in Bahrain. When investigations into security personnel accused of abuses do occur, they are frequently slow and ineffective, thus deepening the culture of impunity. Lack of accountability is also a systemic problem that extends into the government. Mubarak bin Huwail was accused of torturing six medics, and was acquitted in July 2013. Less than a week later, Mubarak was seen meeting with the Prime Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who thanked him for his "good work" and assured him that "the laws don't apply to you." Mubarak bin Huwail was later promoted to Brigadier General and appointed to head of the entire Southern Governorate Police Force.

Due to Bahrain's culture of impunity, the same people continue to oversee severe rights violations. While bin Huwail was in charge of the Sothern Governorate Police Force, Nabeel Rajab – a human rights defender – experienced terrible conditions while held in long-term pre-trial detention in a small local police station, following which, he needed to be hospitalized for months.

4. Involvement of the Royal Family

Members of the royal family are particularly immune to investigation and prosecution, therefore sanctioning a culture of torture, violence and impunity. Following the government's violent suppression of the 2011 pro-democracy movement, credible evidence emerged that Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa – son of Bahrain's king – directed the arbitrary detention and torture of protesters, opposition activists, and athletes. In his capacity as head of the Olympic Committee, Sheikh Nasser created a special commission to identify and punish more than 150 members of the sporting community who had peacefully demonstrated. It was also reported by two opposition leaders that Sheikh Nasser personally tortured them at the Ministry of Interior's facilities in Manama. Opposition figures, including Mohammed Habib al-Miqdad, also accused Sheikh Nasser of flogging and beating them all over their bodies for nearly 12 hours, among other abuses. Sheikh Nasser has never been subject to investigation or prosecution in Bahrain. Then, in 2017, Bahrain's king appointed him to serve as a member of the Supreme Defense Council (SDC) – the country's highest defense authority, which presides over major national security decisions.

This is not the first time that the Bahraini government has appointed an official accused of torture to the SDC. In November 2011, after an independent commission found that the National Security Agency (NSA) – the kingdom's chief intelligence body – was deeply implicated in torture and extrajudicial killing, the king removed its director, Sheikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. However, rather than launch a full criminal investigation, the king proceeded to appoint Sheikh Khalifa secretary-general of the SDC and a personal national security advisor with a ministerial rank.

Sheikha Noura bint Ibrahim al-Khalifa, another member of the Bahraini royal family, was also allegedly involved in torture. Some of the doctors who were sentenced to lengthy jail terms in 2011 for aiding injured protestors alleged that Sheikha Noura beat prisoners with sticks and a rubber hose, and gave electric shocks to the face with a cable. Sheikha Noura was acquitted for all crimes in 2013.

5. Failure of Accountability Mechanisms

Bahrain's human rights and oversight bodies – chief among them the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, the Public Prosecution Office's Special Investigations Unit, and the National Institution for Human Rights – remain closely connected to the government and are incapable or unwilling to properly address the cases brought to their attention. Despite repeated communications and complaints from independent human rights organizations and the UN Special Procedures, these oversight bodies have not fulfilled their mandates, and have repeatedly worked to obscure the rights violations they are meant to investigate.

The Ombudsman continues to fail to address extensive, credible evidence of systematic arbitrary detention, torture, and mistreatment, and it does not provide thorough, transparent information about the resolution of complaints. Their most recent report omitted credible allegations of government responsibility for a death in custody during the latest period under review.

Bahrain's National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), whose members are appointed by the king, has actively endorsed some of the government's most severe abuses. The most recent report by the NIHR, detailing events of 2017, failed to acknowledge any government role in violence against civilians or to even call for investigations into the two lethal raids on the peaceful Diraz sit-in, which ultimately left six demonstrators dead.

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is also mandated to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment. There is no public reporting mandate and complaints are not treated transparently. The organization has largely failed to secure convictions against perpetrators of torture and other human rights violations.

6. Recommendations

We therefore call on the Government of Bahrain to:

- Reform accountability mechanism to ensure their effective independence;
- Transparently prosecute all allegations of torture and abuse;
- Hold government officials at all levels—including the royal family—accountable for abuse.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/56

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09213(E)
1809213

Please recycle

Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen by Saudi Arabia and its Coalition Allies

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain welcomes this opportunity at the 38th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council to raise serious concerns about violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) by Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies in the conflict in Yemen. Since entering the war, Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies have launched thousands of airstrikes in Yemen, many of them targeting civilian-populated areas, while also enforcing a naval and aerial blockade of Yemen. The airstrikes and blockades have indiscriminately targeted non-combatants, in direct contravention of the principles of IHL.

Justification for Saudi Arabia's Intervention

Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies entered the war in Yemen in March 2015 in an ostensible effort to support the legitimate government of Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi citing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions 2140 and 2216 as the reason for their intervention. UNSC 2140 voices support for Hadi's government and calls on all parties to reject violence and work constructively to aid a peaceful political transition.1 UNSC 2216 demands that Houthi forces withdraw from "all areas seized during the latest conflict, relinquish arms seized from military and security institutions, cease all actions falling exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen and fully implement previous Council resolutions."2 Resolution 2216 is partially based on an official request submitted to the UNSC on 24 March 2015 by the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the UN, in which Hadi informs the President of the Security Council that "he has requested from the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States to immediately provide support, by all necessary means and measures, including military intervention, to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis."

While Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies point to UNSC resolutions 2140 and 2216 as the basis for their armed intervention, neither resolution empowers the coalition to engage in indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, or establish a crippling blockade of Yemen that disproportionately affects non-combatants.

Airstrikes

According to the Yemen Data Project, since Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies entered the conflict in Yemen, they have conducted over 16,000 airstrikes.3 While many were military targets – Houthi training camps, positions of pro-Houthi fighters, military convoys, and weapons caches – many of the strikes targeted civilian areas. Among the civilian targets struck by airstrikes were refugee camps,4 schools including a school for the blind,5 markets, weddings,6 and a

1 United Nations Press, "Security Council Adopts Resolution 2140 (2014), Welcoming Yemen's Peaceful Transition towards New Constitution, General Elections," United Nations Security Council, SC/11296, 26 February 2014, https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11296.doc.htm.

2 United Nations Press, "Security Council Demands End to Yemen Violence, Adopting Resolution 2216 (2015), with Russian Federation Abstaining," United Nations Security Council, SC/11859, 14 April 2015, https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11859.doc.htm.

3 Yemen Data Project dataset, last updated 12 March 2018, available at http://yemendataproject.org/data/.

4 Kareem Shaheen, "Witness to air strike on Yemen refugee camp: women and children burned beyond recognition," *The Guardian*, 31 March 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/31/yemen-in-crisis-air-strike-leaves-40-civilians-dead-at-camp.

5 Alex MacDonald, "Yemen centre for blind 'hit in Saudi coalition air raid,'" Middle East Eye, 5 January 2016, http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/saudi-led-coalition-airstrikes-reportedly-hit-centre-blind-yemen-capital-128298478.

6 Ben Norton, "We must pay attention to Yemen: Weddings bombed, civilians killed – with U.S. help," Salon, 9 October 2015, https://www.salon.com/2015/10/09/we_must_pay_attention_to_yemen_eddings_bombed_civilians_killed_with_u_s_help/.

funeral hall.7 The coalition has also attacked hospitals around northern Yemen, including hospitals supported by Doctors without Borders (MSF). As a result of the attacks, and following the 15 August 2016 bombing of Abs Hospital in Yemen's Hajjah governorate, MSF "withdrew its staff from Haydan, Razeh, Al Gamouri, and Yasnim hospitals in Saada governorate and Abs and Al Gamouri hospitals in Hajjah governorate." According to MSF, the 15 August airstrike on Abs Hospital was the "fourth and deadliest attack on an MSF-supported medical facility during the war."8

Among the thousands of airstrikes launched by the Saudi-led coalition, international human rights organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have identified and documented 19 airstrikes in which coalition fighter jets used internationally-banned, British- and Brazilian-manufactured BL755 cluster munitions.9 Amnesty International found evidence of cluster munition use in farmland near the Saudi border, where two brothers found unexploded ordnance in April 2016 and brought them back to their village where one subsequently exploded.10 Human Rights Watch documented a December 2016 airstrike where coalition jets dropped cluster bombs near "two local schools in northern Yemen, killing two civilians and wounding six, including a child," as well as evidence of a February 2017 attack on a farm.11

Blockade

In addition to its campaign of airstrikes, the coalition has placed Yemen under a crippling naval and aerial blockade. This has had a devastating effect on the lives of millions of Yemenis, as the country imports 90 percent of its goods. The naval blockade has severely restricted the import of food, water, and fuel, while the aerial blockade on Sana'a's airport has severely restricted the import of necessary medical as well as humanitarian supplies. As a result, Yemen has become one of the world's worst man-made humanitarian crises, with the UN High Commissioner of Refugees warning that 22.2 million people are in need of aid while 2 million people are internally displaced,12 with over 100,000 people displaced over the past six months alone.13

The humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by a lack of adequate health facilities and infrastructure. According to the directors of the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme, and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), "less than half of Yemen's health facilities are fully functional."14 As a result, Yemenis are not only facing shortages of food, they are also facing disease outbreaks, including cholera, diphtheria, and malaria. Since April 2017, more than a million Yemenis have contracted cholera and more than 2,000 have died,15 while the WHO states that since October 2017 a diphtheria outbreak has affected more than 1,300 people, 80 percent of who are children.16

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7 "Yemen's rebel funeral hall attack 'kills scores,'" BBC News, 9 October 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37598413.

8 Ibid.

9 "Why the UK must stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia," Amnesty International, 20 January 2017, https://www.amnesty.org.uk/why-uk-must-stop-arms-sales-saudi-arabia; "Yemen: Events of 2017," Human Rights Watch, 2018, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/yemen.

10 Ibid Amnesty.

11 Ibid Human Rights Watch.

12 "Yemen Operational Update," UNHRC, 15 – 30 April 2018, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen%20Update%2015-30%20April%202018%20%28Final%29.pdf.

13 "Yemen Humanitarian Update Covering 1 – 7 May 2018, ReliefWeb, 7 May 2018, https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-update-covering-1-7-may-2018-issue-14-enar.

14 "After 1,000 days of conflict, Yemen sliding into 'deepening catastrophe,' UN agencies warn," UN News, 30 December 2017, https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/640802-after-1000-days-conflict-yemen-sliding-deepening-catastrophe-un-agencies-warn.

15 Glen Cary and Sarah Algethami, "Your Questions About Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis, Answered," Bloomberg, updated 20 March 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-22/who-s-to-blame-for-pestilence-near-famine-in-yemen-quicktake.

16 "Diphtheria vaccination campaign for 2.7 million children concludes in Yemen," World Health Organization, 16 March 2018, http://www.emro.who.int/yem/yemen-news/diphtheria-vaccination-campaign-for-27-million-children-concludes-in-yemen.html?format=html.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Violations

IHL seeks to "limit the effects of armed conflict" and to protect persons "who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities."17 As such, it seeks to protect civilians from the effects of conflict and calls on all sides of a conflict to protect non-combatants, including medical personnel, supplies, hospitals, and ambulances. Perhaps most importantly, IHL:

> "Prohibits all means and methods of warfare which
> - fail to discriminate between those taking part in the fighting and those, such as civilians, who are not, the purpose being to protect the civilian population, individual civilians and civilian property; [and]
> - cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering."

Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies' conduct in the Yemen conflict does not effectively discriminate between fighters and civilians. Airstrikes have repeatedly struck civilian areas, killing hundreds of noncombatants as well as striking hospitals and medical facilities. Indeed, MSF judged the danger to their medical staff from coalition airstrikes to be so great they withdrew their staff from six northern hospitals in a near-unprecedented move. The coalition's blockade also fails to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants. The restrictions on the import of food, medicine, fuel, and water is a form of collective punishment, affecting millions of civilians in an attempt to cripple the fighting capabilities of the Houthi rebels.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies' actions in Yemen have led to one of the world's worst man-made humanitarian crises. The combination of thousands of airstrikes on civilian targets and a naval and aerial blockade has brought the country to the brink of famine, with millions of civilians in need of aid, medicine, and food. The coalition's indiscriminate methods stand in clear violation of the rules of IHL.

Saudi Arabia and its allies must:

- Ease the blockade to allow aid to flow freely to all areas of the country;
- Re-open Sana'a airport;
- Cooperate fully and transparently with UN-appointed Group of Eminent Experts;
- Halt all airstrikes until an international, independent, and impartial commission can investigate all allegations of attacks on civilians;
- Immediately halt all fighting to work towards a political settlement to end the conflict

17 "What is International Humanitarian Law?" International Committee of the Red Cross, July 2004, https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/57

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 6
Universal Periodic Review

Written statement* submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09214(E)
1809214

Please recycle

ADHRB Assessment of the UAE 3rd Cycle UPR

1. Third Cycle UPR Overview

The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council recently conducted the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We were glad to see that nearly 100 states gave dozens of new recommendations to the Emirati Government, urging human rights reforms on a variety of thematic issue areas ranging from free expression and harassment of human rights defenders to migrant labor rights and international engagement. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)'s own submission raised similar concerns and highlighted the UAE's failure to implement the vast majority of recommendations from the past UPR cycle. In the absence of the *Report of the Working Group*, which has not been published at the time of this submission, recommendations to the UAE will be quoted and attributed to the member state who delivered the recommendation. ADHRB would therefore like to express support for the following recommendations, and urge the Government of the United Arab Emirates to fully accept all recommendations, and to urgently and transparently implement these reforms.

2. Freedom of Expression

Concern regarding the United Arab Emirates' increased restrictions on free expression was raised often in recommendations during the third-cycle UPR. Since the past UPR, the UAE has been building on an already expansive legal framework designed to criminalize many forms of activism, peaceful criticism, and dissent. The Netherlands called on the UAE to "continue to take steps to uphold freedom of expression by reviewing restrictive articles within its domestic legal framework and ensuring that legislation is fully aligned with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),"and Estonia recommended the UAE "take further steps to ensure the respect of the right to freedom of opinion and expression online and offline including ending the harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders also on the internet." Estonia also recommended the UAE to "decriminalize defamation." Sweden urged the UAE to "amend the cyber-crime law and the anti-terror law and provisions of the penal code respecting freedom of expression in order to bring them in conformity with international standards." Countries like Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United States (US) also formally urged the UAE to lift restrictions on free expression, particularly through the reformation of laws.

3. Judicial Harassment of Human Rights Defenders

Human rights activists continue to be arbitrarily detained, harassed, and subjected to trials marred by due process violations. Belgium stressed the United Arab Emirates needed to "take the necessary measures to ensure that human rights defenders can exercise their work in a safe environment free from harassment and intimidation." Australia voiced concern that "human rights defenders have been arrested without charge in the UAE and recommends the UAE take steps to ensure that all detained have access to a fair and transparent trial." Ghana, Hungary, and the US similarly recommended that the UAE guarantee fair trial rights for all detainees, and many of these countries were joined by Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, and Latvia – among others – in calling for an end to reprisals against human rights defenders. Chile specifically proposed that the United Arab Emirates create a central registry of all detainees to help prevent enforced disappearance and allow families to determine the status of their loved ones.

4. Torture

During the third-cycle UPR, the Czech Republic recommended the UAE "create a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and eliminate systematically torture and other cruel inhumane and degrading treatment and eliminate practiced of arbitrary detention and incommunicado detention and ensure accountability of security staff for acts of torture, and finally to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and ensure right to a fair trial for all without discrimination and in particular reject evidence obtained by torture and ensure all arrests without exceptions are subject to judicial oversight." Finland called upon the UAE to "insure impartial investigations into all allegations of torture and move towards ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT)," along with Denmark and Portugal. Italy highlighted the need for the UAE to "institute safeguards against torture and other ill treatment," and Qatar called for the UAE to "suspend all acts of cruel inhumane treatment."

5. Migrant Workers Rights

The United Arab Emirates has been widely criticized for their treatment of migrant workers. While it has touted steps taken to establish a new law to support domestic workers, much work remains in terms of effectively improving the status and rights of migrant workers. Sweden recommended the UAE "ensure full implementation of the recently updated labor legislation in order to secure that employers and sponsors fully respect the economic, social, and cultural rights of migrants and domestic workers." Austria also called on the UAE to "strengthen the protection of migrant workers, in particular female domestic workers, including by implementing existing legislation reinforcing inspections and enhancing workers access to remedies." Ireland expressed concern that gaps remained in the protection of foreign workers, in particular domestic workers, under the *kafala* system.

6. International Engagement

Several states, including the Netherlands, Latvia and Sweden, called on the United Arab Emirates to extend its cooperation with the United Nations by ratifying treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and issuing standing invitations to all UN Special Procedures. Germany recommended the UAE "cooperate with the UN human rights mechanisms, including by responding positively to visiting requests by special procedure mandate holders."

7. Concluding Recommendations

With the second-cycle UPR, we found the UAE largely failed to implement the recommendations they received. There still remains several areas of concern for human rights in the country, including treatment of migrant workers, use of torture, harassment of human rights defenders, engagement with the international community, and the right to free expression. We therefore take this opportunity to call on the Government of the United Arab Emirates to:

- Engage fully with the UPR process;
- Accept and implement transparently all given recommendations;
- Regularly report to the Council on progress made.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/58

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09215(E)
1809215

Please recycle

Hadi Government's Withholding of Public Sector Employee Salaries Impoverishes Millions, Including Elderly Pensioners

IDO together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), and the Arabian Rights Watch Association (ARWA) take this opportunity at the 38th session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise concerns about the human rights implications of the withholding of pension benefits by the Hadi government from pensioners and older persons in the northern and western governorates of Yemen.

The Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) move to Aden in September 2016 under the control of the Hadi government has resulted in the non-payment of monthly salaries to about 1.5 million public sector employees since September 2016. This came despite assurances made by the Hadi government to the international community that it would undertake all the obligations of the CBY. Given that each public sector employee has an average of five dependents, the lack of payment of their monthly salaries for over twenty months directly impoverishes about 7.5 million people. The reduced purchasing power due to the lack of salary payments has had a ripple effect. It, in turn, negatively affected economic activity in general, further impoverishing merchants and traders and their employees and families.

Although customs and tax revenues collected in southern and eastern governorates surpass the salary expenditures in those governorates, the surplus is not being transferred to branches in the north and west of Yemen where about eighty-five (85) percent of the population lives. In addition, the Hadi government failed to transfer newly printed bank notes that it held and controlled to CBY branches in the northern governorates. It has also failed to transfer the surplus tax revenue from the southern and eastern governorates to the northern and western governorates.

These monetary troubles of the northern and western governorates have been exacerbated by a lack of foreign exchange reserves stemming from the blocking of oil and gas exports and the blockade on food, medicine and fuel imports. This has resulted in the skyrocketing of commodity prices by more than double pre-war price levels which has widened the poverty base in the country. The 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview reinforced this stating, th "[c]onflict, severe economic decline and imposed restrictions are all contributing to basic commodity shortages and price rises, making it difficult for millions of Yemenis to afford food, water, fuel and other necessities even when these are available in markets."1 The 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview followed that assessment, noting that the situation continues to worsen and as a result "poverty amongst the population has continued to rise significantly."2

The withholding the payment of salaries to public sector employees for over twenty months has impoverished millions of civilians. The lack of payment of scholarships for students studying abroad has also had an effect, impacting their right to education and causing hundreds to stop their pursuit of higher education because they neither cover tuition nor their accommodation, including rent and general living expenses.

Hadi Government Withholds Pensions From 41,000 Elderly Persons

The liquidity crisis brought on by unlawful unilateral coercive measures coupled with the withholding of newly printed currency by the Hadi government has severely affected elderly persons who have pensions that are not being paid. Before the CBY's move to Aden, the 123,807 pensioners in Yemen received a monthly pension totalling approximately 5.4 billion Yemeni riyals (YR). After the CBY's move to Aden under the control of the Hadi government, payments stopped to more than 41,000 pensioners living in northern governorates, although pensioners are entitled to cash benefits based on their service for 35 years. The Hadi government cannot claim the pension fund is does not have enough money, because it has a positive balance of approximately YR 800 billion. The pension fund has a 5% shareholding3 in Yemen Liquefied Natural Gas Company that yielded a monthly average of about YR 1.8 billion in 2014 but since the launching of the war, the Coalition has prevented it from exporting and no proceeds have been made available to pay pensioners.4 The fund's YR 800 billion is enough to cover pension entitlements for several years in the future. But the liquidity crisis and the Hadi government's decision selectively pay the pensions of the people located in southern governorates at the expense of those in the northern governorates – with the exception of Taiz and Marib residents – has left over 41,000 elderly people without their sole source of income. More than a third of these pensioners have chronic illnesses making them dependent on the

pension benefits to pay for increasingly expensive and necessary medicine. Some examples of the suffering faced by pensioners follow:

- Abdallah AlSayf was a pensioner since 2014 until his death on 6 September 2017. He was 57-years-old when he died after his pension was withheld for about 12 months. He suffered from cardiovascular disease, but could not afford his medicine. As a result needed immediate medical treatment abroad but restrictions imposed on traveling from Sanaa International Airport delayed his fight for three months and increased the costs of his trip which was routed through Djibouti. He left behind two dependents.
- Abdallah Alsharafi has been a pensioner since 2009. He suffered several brain strokes in 2015 and can no longer pay for his medication because his pension was withheld. He also is blind and has four dependents.
- Yahya Soufan was a pensioner from 2000 until his death on 17 February 2017 at age 75. He died after his health deteriorated rapidly because he was not able to purchase basic necessities like food and water. He left behind one dependent.
- Fatima Alawami has been a pensioner since 2013. Because of the Hadi government's withholding of benefits, she has not been able to purchase basic necessities for her and her dependents. She suffers from eye problems and unless she receives necessary medical treatment, she will reportedly lose her sight.
- Maryam Alkuhlani was a pensioner from 2002 until her dead on 19 June 2017 at age 58. Ever since her pension was withheld her health rapidly deteriorated. She died leaving behind her 90-year-old mother who was dependent on her.

Older persons with entitled pensions are particularly vulnerable because the pension is often times the only income they have and the only way they can cover basic needs and the needs of their dependents. According to the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse. In this way, the withholding of pensions by the Hadi government only exploits their vulnerabilities and worsens their physical and mental state all with the aim of achieving only fleeting political and military objectives.

Recommendations

At the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council, IDO together with ADHRB and ARWA, urge UN HRC Member States to work towards ending the Hadi government's punitive measures, ending the war, compensating its victims, and supporting the Group of Eminent Experts in order to halt human rights abuses and ensure accountability for any and all violations and crimes committed in Yemen.

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1 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview, http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2017-humanitarian-needs-overview, [accessed 12 April 2018].

2 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/yemen_humanitarian_needs_overview_hno_2018_20171204_0.pdf, [accessed 12 April 2018].

3 Yemen LNG Company, "Shareholders," http://www.yemenlng.com/ws/en/go.aspx?c=ylng_share [accessed 20 May 2018].

4 All claims made herein are based on discussions with the head of the General Authority for Social Security and Pensions and in person interviews of pensioners.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/59

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09216(E)
1809216

Please recycle

Complete Closure of Independent Political Space Ahead of Bahrain's 2018 Elections

Over the last seven years, the Government of Bahrain heavily circumscribed basic public freedoms, virtually closing the space for independent political activity. While Bahrain is technically a constitutional monarchy, near-absolute political power is concentrated in the Al Khalifa ruling family, and royals hold almost all key posts. The parliament, known as the National Assembly, is deeply hamstrung and lacks the authority to serve as an effective check on the royal family. All members of the upper house of the National Assembly are appointed by the king, and the government has engaged in a host of electoral abuses – including gerrymandering, voter fraud, and the outright dissolution of political opposition groups – to ensure that the elected lower house is not representative. Ahead of the next vote expected in fall 2018, the government has taken new steps to explicitly prohibit any form of opposition participation.

Elimination of the Opposition

In 2001, just after Bahrain's current king assumed the throne, the population voted overwhelmingly to approve a democratic reform plan known as the National Action Charter. Within a year, however, the king abrogated the agreement and unilaterally issued a new constitution that diverged from the Charter and consolidated the royal family's power. The government gradually instituted new restrictions on all fundamental freedoms, including expression, assembly, association, press, and religion. Formal political parties were banned, and their nominal counterparts – known as political "societies" – made subject to extensive legal constraints.

On the 10th anniversary of the National Action Charter in 2011, nearly half Bahrain's population took part in demonstrations calling on the government to meet its reform commitments and guarantee basic human rights. Security forces violently suppressed the protest movement and the authorities targeted Bahrain's chief opposition societies – Wa'ad, Al-Wefaq, and Amal – for particularly extreme reprisal. During the initial crackdown and its aftermath in 2012, the government temporarily closed Wa'ad and imprisoned its secretary-general; arrested and tortured Al-Wefaq members of parliament; and arbitrarily disbanded Amal, detaining hundreds of members and incarcerating its leader. Some political figures also faced attacks by pro-government gangs, and Wa'ad's headquarters was twice set ablaze. Bahrain's crown prince launched a National Dialogue process with the opposition, but government harassment continued, with other Al-Wefaq leaders arrested for criticizing the government in 2013.

As the National Dialogue collapsed the following year, the government took further steps to punish and dismantle the opposition. During the run-up to that year's elections for the National Assembly's lower house, the Ministry of Justice requested that the courts temporarily suspend Al-Wefaq and Wa'ad; both societies ultimately boycotted the elections, citing widespread government interference. Earlier, in September 2014, security forces detained and tortured Khalil al-Halwachi, a scholar and activist, over his former membership in Amal, ultimately sentencing him to 10 years. In December 2014, authorities arrested Al-Wefaq's leader Sheikh Ali Salman on charges related solely to his political speeches, issuing him a four-year prison term. In 2015, the government released and then immediately rearrested Wa'ad's leader, Ebrahim Sharif, sentencing him to another year in prison on charges related to a political speech. After an Al-Wefaq leader discussed Bahrain's political crisis on a new television channel that same year, the authorities shut the entire media outlet down. Fadhel Abbas, the leader of the smaller Al-Wahdawi opposition society, was arrested for tweets criticizing the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen and ultimately sentenced to three years in prison.

In recent years, the government has effectively eliminated what remained of the formal opposition. The authorities outright dissolved Al-Wefaq in July 2016, with courts rejecting all its subsequent appeals in 2017 and 2018. Security officials shut down the society's website, closed its headquarters, and seized its assets. Less than a year later, in May 2017, the authorities took almost identical measures against Wa'ad, closing the group over unfounded allegations of "incitement of acts of terrorism and promoting violent and forceful overthrow of the [government]" after the society criticized the closure of Al-Wefaq and issued a statement describing Bahrain as experiencing a "constitutional political crisis." The High Court of Appeals confirmed the ruling in October 2017, leaving the small Al-Wahdawi society as the only legal opposition group still operating in Bahrain.

Despite the near total destruction of the formal opposition, Bahraini authorities have continued to arrest and harass other members of these groups, as well as unlicensed political organizations, ahead of the 2018 lower house elections set for fall 2018. Political leaders like Ebrahim Sharif, Farida Ghulam, and Radhi al-Musawi of Wa'ad have faced regular travel bans preventing them and dozens of others from traveling outside Bahrain to attend the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review, violating their right to freedom of movement. Others have been forced into exile and punitively stripped of their Bahraini citizenship.

In November 2017, the authorities brought baseless new charges against Sheikh Ali Salman and two exiled Al-Wefaq members of parliament, Ali al-Aswad and Sheikh Hassan Sultan, linked to Bahrain's ongoing diplomatic row with Qatar. While the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has determined that Sheikh Ali Salman is arbitrarily detained and multiple Special Procedures mandate holders have urged his release, Bahrain's Public Prosecution has now called for the "maximum penalty" against him, which for these new charges is capital punishment. The verdict is expected on 21 June 2018.

Most recently, the authorities have increased pressure on Al-Wahdawi, the last remaining opposition group, with security forces repeatedly interrogating the society's current secretary-general, Hasan al-Marzooq, over "inciting protests" on social media in February and March 2018.

Abusive Electoral Practices and Legal Restrictions

Amid this direct assault on the opposition, the Bahraini government has taken additional steps to undermine popular representation in the lower house of parliament and control the outcomes of elections. Years of gerrymandering have ensured that the lower house does not proportionately represent Bahrain's population, with a significant majority of members representing only a small minority of the electorate. Bahraini authorities have specifically redistricted to dilute the influence of the Shia Muslim majority, amplify that of government supporters, and prevent opposition groups like Al-Wefaq from securing a larger proportion of ballots. In 2010, for example, the average Shia-majority district contained 9,533 constituents compared with just 6,186 for the average Sunni-majority district. Academics have found that sectarian redistricting has also largely hurt secular candidates, like those fielded by Wa'ad. In other cases, the government has completely eliminated municipalities against the will of the district's leadership, such as in 2014, when the king unilaterally abolished an entire governorate.

There is also evidence that the authorities have granted dual citizenship to Saudi nationals, and expedited citizenship for foreign Sunnis employed in the security forces, in order to further alter the country's demographics and influence voting patterns. In 2002, the government reportedly transported thousands of members of Saudi Arabia's al-Dawasir tribe across the causeway into Bahrain to vote in that year's parliamentary election. Since then, the government has established more polling stations located along the border and in other remote areas, many of which are not even connected to specific districts, increasing the opportunity for manipulation or interference. Though Bahrain has invited some international election observers in the past, these are typically not independent delegations, and they have not been able to monitor these isolated polling stations.

In May 2016, the government additionally amended the Law on Political Societies to specifically prohibit religious figures from participating in political groups and discussing politics during sermons, among other restrictions. As yet, it appears the authorities have exclusively used the law to target Shia activists and predominantly-Shia political societies, like Al-Wefaq – though both Sunni and Shia political groups count clerics among their members.

Furthermore, beginning in 2018, local media has reported that the National Assembly is moving to implement a new amendment to the 2002 Law on Political Rights banning all members of the dissolved political societies, or any former member of parliament who resigned, from ever again running for election to the lower house parliament. If it is eventually promulgated, the amendment could permanently prevent any former member of Al-Wefaq, Wa'ad, or Amal – which translates to thousands of Bahrainis – from participating in the country's political system. Coupled with other attacks on Bahrain's opposition, this measure amounts to a complete closure of independent political space ahead of the 2018 elections.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bahrain has wholly abandoned its democratic reform commitments and banned political opposition. With the next set of elections fast approaching, there is no space for real participation and the government will effectively dictate the results. We therefore call on the international community to urge the Bahraini government to:

- Release all prisoners of conscience, including political leaders like Sheikh Ali Salman;
- Reinstate arbitrarily dissolved political societies like Al-Wefaq and Wa'ad and allow opposition groups to operate freely;
- Block or repeal the new amendment to the 2002 Law on Political Rights;
- End abusive practices like discriminatory gerrymandering and political denaturalization; and
- Guarantee that independent civil society organizations and international observers are able to monitor the electoral process without fear of reprisal.

United Nations A/HRC/38/NGO/60

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 June 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June-6 July 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-09217(E)
1809217

Please recycle

Human rights situation in Eritrea

Preface

Maat Association submits this report to illustrate the observations on the human rights situation in Eritrea, which witness the interference of some states in its internal affairs, constituting an attack on the sovereignty and independence of Eritrea and a violation to principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, as well as the negative impact of such interferences on the ability of the State to fulfil its obligations, as provided for in the law.

This intervention coincided with the slowing down of the Eritrean Government's easing of restrictions on fundamental freedoms in the country, restricting activists and opponent's politicians, restricting peaceful protests, as well as restrictions on freedom of expression, association and political parties.

External interference

External interference in Eritrean internal affairs has intensified over the recent period, threatening stability and peace in the Horn of Africa region as a whole. Some neighbouring countries have supported and financed by other governments by hosting and financing the hardlines Eritrean Islamic opposition group "Mohammed Jumma" and establishing training camps for its elements near the Eritrean border, to conduct political and military activities against the Asmara government, and the intelligence services of its own states have provided logistic training for this extremist group, financed by a Gulf state with political relations and interests with the neighbouring countries of Eritrea.

There are certain indications that Ethiopia is interfering in the internal affairs of Eritrea by supporting the Eritrean opposition parties operating from Addis Ababa and providing financial and logistical support, which threatens the stability and security of Eritrea. The Ethiopian threats are a burden on the country and its people, through increased unnecessary expenditure on the purchase of arms, instead of spending these expenditures on development and the provision of basic services.

It should be noted that the principle of non-intervention ensures that states are protected against external pressures in their various forms and, which allows for the strengthening of its stability, and thus has a positive impact on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Economic challenges

Eritrea is experiencing difficult economic conditions as a result of the country's non-war and non-peace situation since independence from Ethiopia in 1993, as Eritrea faces challenges on the reconstruction of infrastructure and the development of its agriculture-based economy, which had deteriorated due to the long periods of conflict faced with Ethiopian colonization.

Despite Eritrea's difficult economic circumstances, which require the intervention of the international community to provide aid to counter those challenges, but the government worked to achieve social justice through the provision of food security, a health system that enjoys extensive financial support, and free education to University level, infrastructure, reduction of disparities between rural/urban areas, construction of roads and dams, building of schools, health centres and hospitals in several parts of the country.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition rates increased over the past few years in many areas of Eritrea, where more than 22.000 children under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition, and "measles" rate in Eritrea was more than 80%, leaving approximately 20% of children without protection from fatal childhood illnesses every year. National data also indicates that many areas have been affected by drought over the past few years 1 . This led to the announcement by FAO; that Eritrea is among the 37 countries in need to food aid by July 2018 2 .

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1 Eritrea to vaccinate all children under five years old against measles in national campaign, you can read more on: https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/eritrea.html

2 Conflicts and weather patterns are pressure factors on food security, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (**FAO**), 5 March 2018.http://www.fao.org/news/story/ar/item/1105143/icode/

Rights of children and women

Eritrea has made significant progress on the implementation of women's rights, having signed various international conventions related to women's rights, and there are no discriminatory laws against women, and the relevant laws provide for equal rights for women and men with regard to certain issues such as land ownership and citizenship, nationality and children's rights. The Government had also continued its policy of zero tolerance of all forms of sexual violence, and all concerned agencies had increased awareness-raising campaigns .3 The Government also issued a law to prohibit the practice of female genital mutilation, and intensive campaigns had been carried out on the subject, with penalties in cases where the courts have been informed of. The government makes an effort with regard to the rights of the child through the development of a national strategy, aimed at providing a better environment for the development of children and the empowerment of local communities to promote good practices for child care and adequate socialization, and the community program for the reintegration of orphans has expanded.

Freedom of expression and association

The Government continued to impose systematic and arbitrary restrictions on the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and circulation of information. Eritrea at the end of the list of world classification issued by "Reporters Without Borders" 4 , for its violations against journalists, and the participation of any person in the country's information may expose him to arrest or detention, as there are no political parties other than the "Popular front for democracy and justice", the governor, plus all the unions are operated by the government, not allowing for the establishment of public gatherings or non-governmental organizations, and the activities of international organizations were severely restricted. Despite the numerous shortcomings of the constitution, which contains broad powers for the president, it is frozen, in addition to freezing the work of the House of Assembly as well.

Freedom of religion and belief

The authorities have tightened restrictions on freedom of religion, where Christians are discriminated, detained for long periods without charge because of their religious beliefs. Many evangelical Christians continued to practice their religion in secret to avoid imprisonment. Patriarch Antonius, head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, attending a mass in the capital, the last time he was publicly seen 10 years before he was sentenced to house arrest because of his objection to government interference in the affairs of the church.5

Many of the Islamic schools in the country were closed on the orders of the government authorities, in addition to the arrest "Mohamed Nur", the former director of the "Al Diaa Islamic Private School" in Akriya neighborhood last October; for failure to implement the government's orders; refusing to impose a ban on Hijab (Head Scarfs) or Niqab (Face Cover).

Rights of refugees and migrants

Although the European Commission has allocated more than €13 million to Eritrea to support employment and develop skills in the country as a means of reducing migration, however, the waves of migration are increasing as a result of the worsening human rights situation. Sudan constituting a major transit area for Eritrean refugees. One of its courts made 104 refugees return to Eritrea, exposing them to numerous violations, and thousands of Eritreans fleeing are exposed to grave dangers 6 .

3 National report of the State of Eritrea, universal periodic revie
http://cutt.us/SWu1S
4 Classification of press freedom 2017, Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
https://rsf.org/ar/reports/2017-press-freedom-index-ever-darker-world-map
5 Annual report 2017, Amnesty International, op. cit.
6 Amnesty International report, op. cit.

Recommendations

• The need to operationalize international mechanisms for the protection of human rights, ensuring the sovereignty of Eritrea over its territory and the realization of the principle of good-neighborliness and non-interference in its affairs, which constitute an impediment to Eritrea's stability.

• Investigate the movements of certain external forces in the Horn of Africa and their relation to human rights violations.

• Approval of requests for country visits by UN special rapporteurs.

• International agencies, donor bodies and international funding trusts should provide the necessary assistance to Eritrea so that it can address the root causes of the worsening economic and social rights.

• Allow international organizations and their representatives to conduct further country visits to Eritrea and share with them all regard to its work, in order to provide a transparent legal image on the one hand and to provide appropriate assistance on the other.

• To give effect to the international instruments to which Eritrea is a signatory with regard to human rights and to ratify other international conventions that it has not yet ratified.

• Opening up civil space to politicians and jurists, releasing press freedom and not following journalists in critics of the government and to opened the way for the formation of community associations, allowing international organizations to carry out their work within the country, and the government to lift its hand from trade unions.
• Take serious steps to halt the exodus of Eritrean refugees to other States, with the need to coordinate with Yemen, Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti to regularize the situation of those refugees.

• Accelerate measures to reduce any famine or drought situation accepted by the country, while providing a suitable nutritional environment for children, women and the elderly. With the need for full coordination with relevant international organizations; "UNICEF, FAO, WHO".

• To promote freedom of religion and belief for all, as well as non-interference of the government in the affairs of religious institutions contrary to the freedom to practice religious rites.